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ROUND TABLE

The Roving Reporter Discusses

THE CENSUS

with

LOUIS WIRTH and J. FREDERIC DEWHURST

319th BROADCAST IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY • 107

MARCH 31, 1940

The University of Chicago

ROUND TABLE

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NOTE

The supplementary information contained in the footnotes to the following text, developed by staff research, is not to be considered as representing the opinions of the ROUND TABLE *speakers. Following the transcript of the broadcast are questions which readers may wish to use for analysis and discussion. It is hoped that teachers and discussion leaders may find this additional service of the* ROUND TABLE *transcript helpful in their study of the subject discussed in the broadcast.*

Pamphlet Shelves

THE CENSUS*

A UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ROUND TABLE BROADCAST

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LOUIS WIRTH, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Chicago

J. FREDERIC DEWHURST, Economist, Twentieth Century Fund, New York City

and

THE ROVING REPORTER

* A radio discussion broadcast from the University of Chicago over the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company, Sunday, March 31, 1940, at 1:30 P.M., Central Standard Time.

The ROUND TABLE, oldest educational program continuously on the air, is broadcast entirely without a script. Subjects are chosen because of their social, political, or economic significance. The program has no "ax to grind." In the selection of speakers, the effort is to provide a balanced discussion by participants who have special competence and knowledge. The opinion of each speaker is his own and in no way involves the responsibility of either the University of Chicago or the National Broadcasting Company.

THE CENSUS

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Every ten years an army of trained workers is sent in search of information about the people of the United States. At one time a small handful of questioners completed the task within several months. Later thousands of workers collected data which required years to tabulate. This year more than a hundred thousand census takers will gather information on more than 130 million Americans. The job will be completed within a month. Within a few more months the preliminary estimates derived from the data gathered will be released to the public—to tell America more about itself and its people.

Recent weeks have witnessed intense controversy about the questions being asked in this, the sixteenth census of the United States. New questions have been added and the government has been accused of invading the privacy of individuals.

In an effort to clarify the objectives of the decennial census and to evaluate these recent criticisms the University of Chicago ROUND TABLE *sent its Roving Reporter on a tour of the nation to sound public opinion on the census.*

The ROUND TABLE *invited two experts to its microphone to answer his question: "Is There Any Sense to the Census?"*

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MR. REPORTER: Wirth, what size shoes did your grandfather wear, and "who was the lady I seen you with last night?"

MR. WIRTH: Well, the lady you saw me with was my wife, but you don't need to worry about the size shoes that my grandfather wore. I'd like to remind you that the nation's doorbells are going to begin ringing for the taking of the sixteenth census of the United States.[1]

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[1] *The 1940 census began April 2. Though provision is made for the count to begin on April 1, there has always been a feeling that the public might mistake the enumerators for "April Fool's Day" jokers.*

MR. REPORTER: Since I was on the ROUND TABLE three weeks ago I have been covering the eastern part of the country, talking to people of every sort as the ROUND TABLE'S Roving Reporter and asking them about the census. Before I give you some of their squawks I'd like you to tell me what the census is.

MR. DEWHURST: Well, it is an inventory of our country: of the people in it, of the industries, and everything else about it. You couldn't imagine a business firm getting along without an annual inventory. We take an inventory every ten years.

MR. WIRTH: We began it in 1790 and this is the 150th anniversary of that ancient American institution, the United States census.

MR. REPORTER: Does it run into money taking this census?

MR. WIRTH: It runs into a lot of money.

MR. DEWHURST: Over thirty million dollars for the population and housing census alone.[2]

MR. REPORTER: What kind of people take the census?

MR. WIRTH: Well, the people who take the census are people who are appointed in each local community of the United States. They have to pass a very rigorous examination and are selected because of their competence.

MR. REPORTER: Let me ask you confidentially, are these census takers Democrats?

MR. WIRTH: I think this is a public bit of news: they are Democrats!

MR. DEWHURST: Most of them were Republicans in 1930.

MR. WIRTH: Precisely! It happens that this time the Democrats are in power and they are probably going to appoint Democrats to take the census.

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[2] *In addition to population and housing censuses the Bureau of the Census conducts separate inquiries regarding manufacturing, agriculture, and religion.*

MR. DEWHURST: I'd much rather see them all under civil service.

MR. WIRTH: So would I, but if it isn't possible to have the post office do the job for us, or to have some volunteers who are sworn in for the purpose do the job for us, the best thing to do is to take the competent people where we can find them.[3] I think there are as many competent Republicans as there are Democrats.

MR. REPORTER: You know, fellows, nearly everybody I talked with about this questionnaire said: "I don't care! What difference does it make? Go ahead!" There are a few people who did an awful lot of beefing. I was in a small town in Indiana and I went to the home of a widow who lives alone in a house which she owns. She has two dogs with her. She is afraid of burglars. She said that she gets approximately seventy-five dollars a month income from her husband's insurance policies and she was afraid that the census taker would tell how much income she was getting and the gossip would go all around town and she would have her house robbed, and and what not. Are the census takers likely to do that?

MR. DEWHURST: In the first place she wouldn't have to report how much income she was getting if she was getting seventy-five dollars a month. She would have to report that she was getting over fifty dollars income other than wages and salary. In the second place, if the census taker told anybody he would go to prison for two years.

MR. WIRTH: It is a felony for any of the census takers to reveal any information they gather from the people of the United States about the census and they can be fined a thousand dollars for revealing that information.

MR. DEWHURST: That means losing your citizenship.

MR. REPORTER: Then all this beefing about having your

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[3] *In Great Britain, postmen take the census by leaving blanks to be filled out.*

neighbor know what your business is and telling everybody in town about it overlooks that little item: that if he does open his mouth he goes right to the penitentiary.

MR. DEWHURST: It is all nonsense! I have never heard of a census enumerator being penalized for that.

MR. WIRTH: And as a matter of fact, as far as the people go who respond to the census, there was a test census taken in Indiana —maybe in the same town that you were in.

MR. REPORTER: South Bend.

MR. WIRTH: That's where it was! Of 186 thousand people asked, there wasn't anyone who refused and only a few people were not at home and couldn't answer the questions.[4] That gives you an idea of how ready the American people are to answer these questions.

MR. REPORTER: Gentlemen, I think there are some of the American people who have been reading their newspapers and who have heard a lot about their personal liberty being pried into or taken away from them by snoopers and what not, who are worried about the fact that the government will get hold of all this information about their income. Now, of course, they get it on the income tax anyway, don't they?

MR. DEWHURST: Of course they do. As far as prying into your personal liberty—if that is what you call it—we have been doing that every ten years for one hundred fifty years.

MR. WIRTH: We have been taking it for granted that we take a census every decade, and we have been taking it for granted just as much as we take for granted the air that we breathe. Aren't there a lot of things that the government does that we sort of take for granted?

MR. DEWHURST: How about the Coast Guard and the Public Health Service and the Lighthouse Service?

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[4] *This "trial" census was taken in the summer of 1939 in St. Joseph and Marshall counties, Indiana.*

MR. REPORTER: Well, now, look! In the pursuit of truth I went into a night club and talked to a cigarette girl. She said that what bothered her was the personal questions they will ask.

MR. WIRTH: You get into the oddest places!

MR. REPORTER: Anywhere to find the truth wherever it takes me. She said the personal questions bothered her: whether she was divorced, or what her age was; how many children she'd had. Is all that stuff new in this census?

MR. DEWHURST: No, it has been asked for years and years.

MR. WIRTH: Years ago they used to ask what diseases you had had—all the unmentionable things. They used to ask whether you were an idiot, whether you were blind or had good eyesight.[5]

MR. REPORTER: How would you know if you were an idiot?

MR. WIRTH: You probably would not be giving a truthful answer if you were asked the question, but they asked it anyway.

MR. DEWHURST: As a matter of fact, back in 1850, during Zachary Taylor's administration, they asked for the total value of your real estate. That was ninety years ago. In the next census, 1860, you had to report every piece of property you owned: your house and lot and farm if you had any, and horses and cattle.

MR. WIRTH: And mortgages on your property.

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[5] *Question 13 in the census schedule of 1850 reads:* [*Indicate*] *"Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict." In 1870 "pauper, or convict" was dropped from this question. In 1880 question 20 read: "Maimed, crippled, bedridden, or otherwise disabled?" The census schedule of 1890 contained the following questions: "Single, married, or divorced? Months unemployed during the census year? Able to read? Able to write? Able to speak English? Suffering from acute or chronic disease (with name of disease and length of time afflicted)? Defective in mind, sight, hearing, or speech; crippled, maimed, deformed? A prisoner, convict, homeless child, or pauper?"*

MR. DEWHURST: And watches, and your grandfather's snuff box. In addition, they asked you whether you were a prisoner or convict or pauper or deformed and everything else.

MR. REPORTER: That's enough! Then this fellow down in Washington—Roosevelt—didn't invent this stuff?

MR. WIRTH: No!

MR. DEWHURST: By no means!

MR. REPORTER: That's enough. I want to know what use the census is. I mean, what's it for in the first place? What's the good of knowing how many people there are in the country?

MR. WIRTH: Its main purpose was to count the population of the various states to determine how many representatives they should have in Congress.[6]

MR. DEWHURST: Yes, every state is entitled to one Congressman for every 279,712 people. This ratio changes every census period and it is going to change this time.

MR. WIRTH: Maybe, Mr. Reporter, that helps to account for the squawking I've heard. It has mostly come from certain sections of the country—in the East and Northeast—and those are probably the sections of the country that are going to lose some representation in Congress when compared with the West and the South where the population has been moving and increasing.

MR. REPORTER: Oh, yes, all of these "oakies," as you call them—these people out of the Dust Bowl who have moved to Cali-

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[6] *Article I, section 2 of the Constitution reads: "Representatives . . . . shall be apportioned among the several States . . . . according to their respective numbers. . . . . The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years. . . . ."*

fornia—they have increased the population of California to such a large extent that California is going to get more Congressmen.[7]

MR. WIRTH: Yes, and I think we people on the ROUND TABLE are in a position to point that out since it probably wouldn't come out in any other way.

MR. REPORTER: Let me ask you these census questions. I have got the population schedule here.[8]

MR. WIRTH: Before you start with that let me swear you in. I'll say abra-cadabra, and now you are a census taker.

MR. DEWHURST: How do you know he can pass the exam?

MR. WIRTH: I'm not so sure he is completely literate.

MR. REPORTER: I voted the right way, gentlemen.

MR. WIRTH: You are going to ask me these questions and I am Mr. So and So. You are knocking at the door.

MR. REPORTER: I am the census taker.

MR. WIRTH: How are you?

MR. REPORTER: I'm all right. But I don't want to tell you how I am. I am asking you questions, Mr. Citizen.

MR. WIRTH: Have you any authority to ask me questions?

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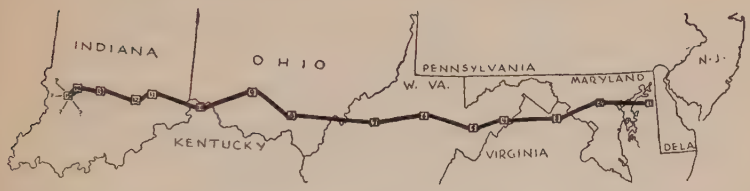
[7] *The National Resources Committee report, "Problems of a Changing Population," p. 99, reads: "The movement of native-born persons to California has been unequaled in volume by similar movements to any other State. The number of persons who were born elsewhere but were living in California in 1930 was about one-third the total population of Canada." Page 229: "During the 4 months ending October 15, 1935, more than 30,500 men, women, and children in parties 'needing manual employment' entered California in automobiles bearing out-of-State licenses."*

[8] *For lists of the actual questions to be asked in the 1940 census, see pages 27 and 28.*

THE WESTERN PATH OF THE CENTER OF POPULATION: 1790–1930



MR. REPORTER: Yes, sir. I have a document here that shows I am the census taker, properly signed and sealed.

MR. WIRTH: Okay! Go ahead.

MR. REPORTER: I want to know what your age was at your last birthday—I don't have to ask you a lot of these questions, you see, because I can tell what sex you are by looking at you; I can tell what color you are by looking at you—and whether you are living in a house in town or on a farm.

MR. WIRTH: Just so you don't ask me something I don't want to tell you.

MR. REPORTER: You *are* going to tell me. If you don't you'll go to jail. How old were you at your last birthday?

MR. WIRTH: I was forty-two.

MR. REPORTER: Are you married or single?

MR. WIRTH: Married, with two kids.

MR. REPORTER: What was your former residence?

MR. WIRTH: I lived on a farm near Tulsa, Oklahoma.

MR. REPORTER: By the way, Mr. Citizen, why do I want to ask you that question?

MR. WIRTH: That is a very interesting point. Can you enlighten us on that, Mr. Dewhurst?

MR. DEWHURST: There has been a lot of migration in the last ten years, after the depression and during the recovery. We don't know very much about where the people of the country are living now. We don't know how many have left the farms and how many have gone back to the farms.[9]

MR. WIRTH: You get some idea as to how many people have moved in *Grapes of Wrath*[10] and in some of the recent literature, but we don't have any exact figures about employment.

MR. REPORTER: Now, you lived on a farm five years ago. Then you moved to the city?

MR. WIRTH: Yes, and I am one of the many, many hundreds of thousands of Americans who have moved from the country to the city.

MR. REPORTER: Mr. Citizen, when did you last take a bath? No, that's not on this schedule. That's enough of this monkey business as my little girl would say. Let's get on to this stuff of employment. There is a whole block of questions here that ask whether you are employed, whether you work in a private business or for the government, whether you are seeking work or not, whether you are unable to work, whether you are a new worker, what kind of work you are in. What is a new worker, Wirth?

MR. WIRTH: Those are the people who stood on the platform a year ago in June perhaps—or two or three years ago—receiving diplomas, ready to enter life, ready to enter industrial employment. They are people who have been looking for jobs. One thing the census is going to tell us is how many of those people there are, where they are, and what they are trained for.

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[9] *See the pictographs on pages 14 and 15.*

[10] *The well-known novel by John Steinbeck, recently made into a motion picture of the same name, depicting the difficulties of an Oklahoma family forced by drought and depression to migrate to California as agricultural laborers.*

MR. REPORTER: What good does it do, for instance, to have this record of new workers, of young people who have never had jobs?

MR. DEWHURST: It is part of the whole picture of employment. It is the biggest problem we have right now.

MR. WIRTH: Didn't you read in the newspapers last week, when they were discussing the NYA proposal, that they wanted to increase it by quite a sum: about one hundred million dollars or so.[11] If you are going to make any plans for the youth of the country you have to find out how big the problem is. And don't forget that, if you look across the sea to Germany—who were the people that started the revolutionary movement?

MR. REPORTER: I can tell you that because I was a reporter over there a few years ago. They were the youngsters who had grown up during and after the World War who had never in their lives had a job. They were so desperate they would take anything.

MR. WIRTH: Precisely! And the problem is the same here, and the census is going to give us the facts about it.

MR. REPORTER: What's the necessity of finding out what kind of work people are in?

MR. DEWHURST: That's to discover what kind of a labor supply we have. There are occupations and industries and skills. It is just as important to private employers as it is to the government to know more about this.

MR. WIRTH: What about the other side of it, Mr. Reporter? Haven't you heard all the controversy about how many people were unemployed in this country?

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[11] *The National Youth Administration conducts work projects for non-school youth, and special projects in cooperation with high schools and universities so that students may continue their studies with part-time employment. In May, 1939, 375,000 young people were receiving aid under the student program and 225,000 others under the work program.*

MR. REPORTER: I certainly have. Everybody has been making estimates. The AF of L, the CIO, the National Industrial Conference Board, make estimates, and just the other day the newspaper columnists started arguing when one of them said there were really only two million unemployed.[12] Don't we know how many there are by this time?

MR. WIRTH: We don't have any accurate figures. We have only these guesses. The census is going to substitute an accurate count for all of the guessing that has been done by private parties.

MR. DEWHURST: That's right. Almost everybody in the country has been guessing about it except the government.

MR. WIRTH: That's right.

MR. REPORTER: That sounds fairly important. But you said a lot of this material was going to be of interest to manufacturers and that manufacturers and businessmen wanted these questions in the census. I thought you said it was all confidential; that it was the property of the Census Bureau and that nobody could ever get it away from them.

MR. DEWHURST: The manufacturers don't get figures on individuals or individual families or householders.

MR. WIRTH: They don't find out what you reply to the census man.

MR. DEWHURST: No. In fact, that wouldn't do them any good. What they want to know is statistical averages.

MR. WIRTH: Nobody can get these figures; not even the President of the United States can get these figures if he went to the Census Bureau.

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[12] *"Time" reports (March 25, 1940, p. 19) American Federation of Labor estimate of unemployment (December, 1939): 9,379,000; CIO estimate: 10,469,000; National Industrial Conference Board estimate: 8,407,000.*

MR. REPORTER: You mean that *Mr. Roosevelt* couldn't get them?

MR. DEWHURST: He certainly could not! The Director of the Census would go to prison for two years and pay a thousand-dollar fine if he gave them to anybody, including the President.

MR. REPORTER: I'm beginning to sweat just at the thought of it. I think the hottest stuff in this whole questionnaire is this last group of questions on income.

MR. WIRTH: I thought you were going to mention that.

MR. REPORTER: I'll tell you now, the way I've been getting this dope around the country is that people think that they have a right to keep their income private. Now, of course, as you pointed out, Dewhurst, the government has this information from the income tax. But the government doesn't know anything about the income of the fellows who don't make income tax payments.

MR. DEWHURST: The government has had information on their income for the last three years under the Social Security Act.

MR. REPORTER: What do you mean?

MR. DEWHURST: Every time you are paid a dollar of wages it is reported to the Social Security Board.

MR. WIRTH: Aren't there about forty million cards?

MR. DEWHURST: Over forty million cards; over forty million workers' names down there, and every penny they have received in the last three years is recorded.

MR. WIRTH: What the census is going to do is give us the figures, comparable to those, of all of the people who are not under social security.[13]

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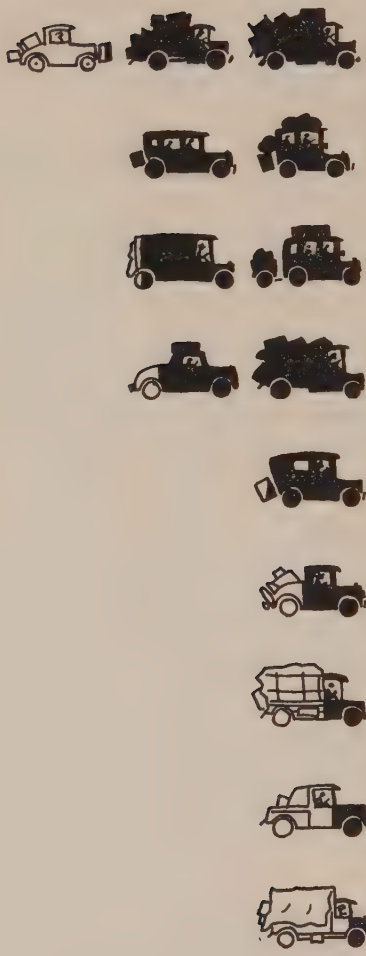
[13] *Domestic servants, agricultural workers, employees of the federal, state, or local governments, and workers for non-profit educational, religious, scientific, and charitable organizations are not covered by the Social Security Act.*

WHAT WILL TH

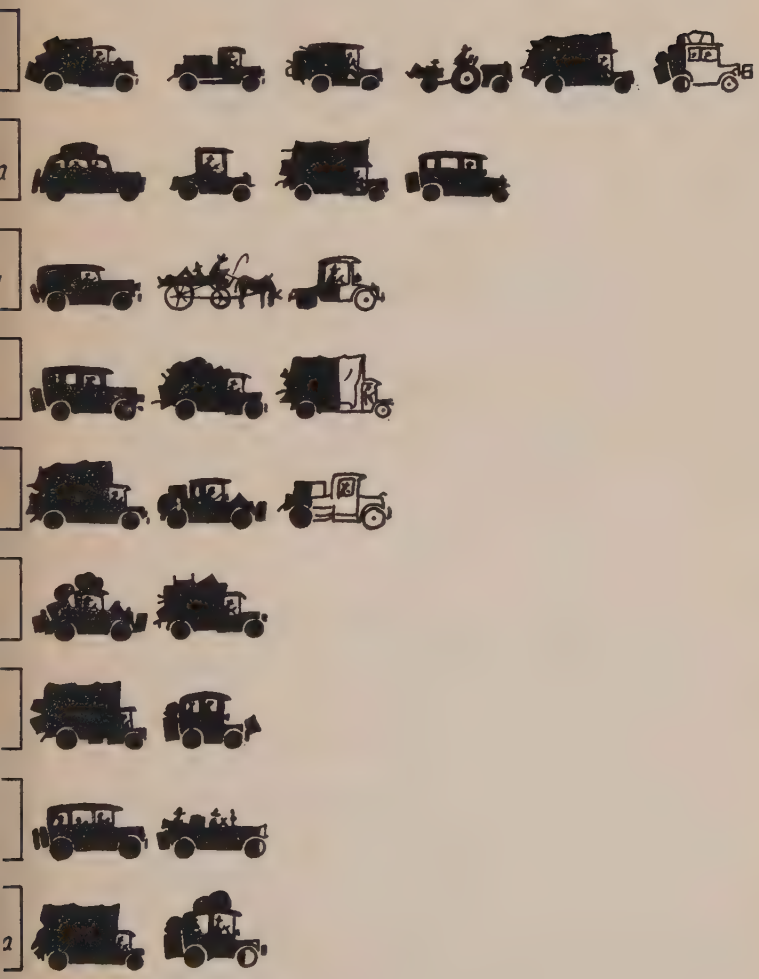
CHANGES IN TOTAL



EACH COMPLETE BLACK SYM

ENSUS SHOW?

POPULATION: 1920–30



FTY THOUSAND PERSONS

MR. DEWHURST: That's right.

MR. WIRTH: In addition to that, the census is going to give us all the other information about who makes what: plumbers, carpenters, young people, women in industry, and others.

MR. DEWHURST: As a matter of fact, the Census Bureau couldn't any more get this information from the Social Security Board than the Social Security Board could get it from the Census Bureau.

MR. REPORTER: That's definitely their property under the law?

MR. WIRTH: Sure! You've never heard of any case of census figures being used in the prosecution of, let's say, Capone or Whitney or anybody you may have heard of in recent years have you?

MR. DEWHURST: They've used income tax figures and treasury figures, but never the census figures.

MR. REPORTER: I covered the Capone trial and the Insull trial. They certainly threw everything in the book at those gentlemen, but there wasn't any mention of the census returns.

MR. DEWHURST: They couldn't have gotten it if they had wanted it.

MR. REPORTER: That's fairly clear. These questions that this Senator from New Hampshire is raising all this row about—what's his name?

MR. DEWHURST: Tobey.[14]

MR. REPORTER: He's talking about personal liberty. Is he a great fighter for personal liberty?

MR. WIRTH: I've never heard of him under that title, have you, Dewhurst?

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[14] *Charles W. Tobey, of Temple, New Hampshire. He was a member of the House of Representatives from 1933 to 1939; and was elected to the Senate in November, 1938.*

MR. DEWHURST: No, I never had until this time.

MR. WIRTH: Whenever the great issues about personal liberty and social security of the American people are spoken of I hear of a different set of people from those that have been doing the squawking about the census.

MR. REPORTER: Most of the newspapers I've been reading say that the census is okay and that the government has got every right to ask these questions; that there isn't any prying or snooping that the government should not do as long as it goes to this extent and no further. A few of them, though, are taking Tobey's position and talking about personal liberty and telling people that they don't have to sign these blanks or answer the questions.

Now one newspaper—the Miami [Fla.] *Herald*—says that the people who are agitating against the census are guilty of arousing the American people to civil disobedience.

MR. DEWHURST: That's exactly right, I think. After all, the census is required by law.

MR. WIRTH: And it was a law passed by the representatives of the people in Congress.

MR. REPORTER: I've got the two income questions that these fellows are worried about. The first one asks you the amount of wages or salary you received in 1939, and the second one asks whether you got fifty dollars or more from sources other than wages or salary. Those are the only two income questions.

MR. DEWHURST: That's right.

MR. REPORTER: What about this fifty dollars or more from sources other than money wages? Let's say I'm a retired railroad baron and I don't do a lick of work. I just sit out on my veranda and clip the coupons or hire a guy to clip the coupons for me. I made half a million dollars last year in dividends. What do I say in reply to these questions?

MR. DEWHURST: You say: "I received over fifty dollars last year," and that's all.

MR. WIRTH: Yes or no. As far as the income is concerned from wages and salaries, if it was more than five thousand dollars, you say "over five thousand"; if it was under, you must give the correct amount.

MR. REPORTER: One of my wanderings, interestingly enough, led me up to a book-maker's joint. I've been in a night club and a "bookie." I guess I've been in all the wrong places, but I wanted to talk to this fellow because he is practicing an illegal business.

MR. WIRTH: You've been doing some snooping of your own!

MR. REPORTER: I'll say I have. They didn't seem to mind, though. This "bookie" said the only thing that worried him was that he had to say where he derived his money.

MR. DEWHURST: That doesn't have to worry him. Even if he were a burglar and highway robber, he could report that occupation to the census and nobody else would find out anything about it.

MR. WIRTH: As a matter of fact, people have reported such things to the census in perfect confidence and with perfect security.

MR. DEWHURST: As a matter of fact, most of them wouldn't tell the truth and say they were highway robbers or burglars, but if they did tell the truth they could do it safely.

MR. REPORTER: You mean that we might get the total number of burglars in the country: their marital status, the kind of house they live in, their average wages, and so on, but we wouldn't know who they were?

MR. DEWHURST: That's right.

MR. REPORTER: Wouldn't it be nice if we *knew* who they were.

MR. WIRTH: I am surprised that you haven't asked about the

housing questions in the census, because those are the ones the critics have been talking about as invading privacy.[15]

MR. REPORTER: I get a little mixed up with all this red tape or white paper. Here's this other sheet on the housing census. That's separate. Has there ever been one before?

MR. WIRTH: There have been some questions asked on housing in previous censuses.

MR. DEWHURST: Questions on mortgages and rent?

MR. WIRTH: Yes.

MR. REPORTER: Look! Here is a question: "Is the property mortgaged?" Why do they have to know that?

MR. DEWHURST: It is important to know what sections of the country and what classes of people own their homes, or don't, the amount of the mortgages on them, and what interest they are paying.

MR. WIRTH: Precisely! Isn't the government one of the biggest mortgage holders in the country? Don't they have FHA and HOLC Loans running into the billions?

MR. DEWHURST: I think the biggest of all in both farms and city real estate.

MR. REPORTER: Here's another one. They want to know what kind of plumbing facilities you've got. I suppose back in the days of the Founding Fathers they could just look back of the farm house and see. What is that question good for?

MR. WIRTH: That is an awful good question it seems to me, because it is going to tell us how the American people live. It is going to give us an index to their standard of living, and tell us if it is

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[15] *While some questions relating to housing have been asked in past census enumerations, this will be the first large-scale effort to secure complete housing data through the decennial census.*

true that "one-third of the people are ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed."

MR. DEWHURST: That is very important to the private producers of plumbing and building materials.

MR. REPORTER: Oh, are they the fellows who wanted this?

MR. DEWHURST: I'll say they are! They are the ones who have insisted on the housing census and fought for it for years.

MR. REPORTER: Is it too late to slip in a question about how many people listen to the ROUND TABLE?[16]

MR. WIRTH: I am afraid you could not get that in, because you are a "private interested party," and there are all kinds of questions that private groups have been wanting to slip in.

MR. DEWHURST: I suppose in the aggregate there must have been three thousand questions suggested for the census. There are about thirty of them now on the schedule.

MR. WIRTH: Some people wanted to ask what religion you belonged to, and what church you attended.

MR. DEWHURST: And whether you believed in God or not.

MR. WIRTH: Yes, and some people wanted to know what party you belonged to. None of those questions are asked in the census.

MR. REPORTER: I read in the Los Angeles *Times* an editorial attacking the attackers of the census. It said that in the 1907 industrial census there was a question asking women how many petticoats they wore.

MR. WIRTH: They aren't asking any questions as private as that this time.

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[16] *Recent audience surveys conducted by an independent research organization credit the* ROUND TABLE *with a weekly audience in the neighborhood of five million, the largest of any public service discussion program on the air today.*

MR. DEWHURST: There aren't enough petticoats now to make it worth while.

MR. REPORTER: You know a good deal about housing in this country as a sociologist, Wirth. Let's say we find out what kind of houses there are in the country: how the people are living, how many in a room, what rent they are paying. What good is that going to do?

MR. WIRTH: I've been in many of the slums in the country—in Chicago, New York, Washington, and Philadelphia—and I've seen houses where they say there are three or four families living in quarters that aren't big enough for one family. A whole floor has only one bathtub and no running hot or cold water in some places. Some have almost no facilities for human decency. These questions will give us figures on the basis of which we can make some plans.

MR. DEWHURST: We know those conditions exist but we don't know how extensive they are.

MR. WIRTH: And we don't know where they are.

MR. DEWHURST: Exactly! If either private industry or the government is going to do anything about it they've got to know what kind of a problem they are facing.

MR. WIRTH: Yes, and the same thing applies to the population generally. We want to know where people are moving to; whether certain areas are becoming devastated and whether other areas are growing up and becoming more densely populated.

MR. DEWHURST: He's getting an education out of this.

MR. REPORTER: Gentlemen, don't jump on me. I'm just asking you what people are asking me.

MR. WIRTH: But people perhaps don't understand, and if you had known more about it you could have told them that it is private industry that is asking these questions. They want to know, for instance, whether they should manufacture baby buggies or wheel chairs.

MR. DEWHURST: The questions on age are very important to individuals. The Census Bureau is getting about a thousand requests a week from individuals asking when they were born. There were no birth certificates for them and they need to know that information to know whether they are qualified for an old-age pension.

MR. WIRTH: Don't we need to know whether we ought to build schools or old people's homes? How are we going to know how many children there are? Whether the families are growing bigger or smaller?

MR. REPORTER: How does that business about wheel chairs versus baby carriages tie up with these questions they ask? Has that got anything to do with asking women how many children they've had?

MR. DEWHURST: Of course it has. Those questions will show the average age of the population; show that the average age is changing; that there are going to be fewer children and more old people. The population has been getting older for a good many years and it will probably continue to do so. That is very important not only to the government in relation to the social security program but it is also important to private producers and business firms.

MR. WIRTH: If they are going to speculate that the population will continue to grow as it has grown in the last thirty or forty years they are going to be mistaken. There is going to be a lot of waste and a lot of bankruptcy.

MR. DEWHURST: Take the matter of public education: already in a great many cities the attendance in primary grades is going down and will continue to decrease, and this will carry over into the higher grades in the future. The time will come when we will have too many schools in the primary grades and not enough old people's homes and provision for the aged.

MR. REPORTER: Then if we want to find out whether that fellow in Washington . . . . what's his name?

MR. WIRTH: Roosevelt.

MR. REPORTER: . . . . was right when he said that one-third of the population is ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed, or whether that was demagoguery, the only way we can find out is to take this census.

MR. WIRTH: Yes, you can only find out how many radios there are in American homes through the census. We don't know how many people are listening to this ROUND TABLE—that isn't something that the census will ask—but we will know what facilities the American people have.

MR. REPORTER: I want to see if I've got you straight on this whole business. In the first place, you two men are experts—or at least nobody has proved you aren't.

MR. DEWHURST: A good thing!

MR. REPORTER: You work for institutions—you, Wirth, for the University of Chicago, and you, Dewhurst, for the Twentieth Century Fund—which are supposed to be looking for the truth. I assume you haven't any axes to grind.

MR. DEWHURST: That's right.

MR. REPORTER: All right! I am the question man again. I am the census taker and I am going to ask you some questions. Do you think there is any sense to it?

MR. DEWHURST: Of course there is!

MR. WIRTH: Certainly it is one of the most important things we have to do.

MR. REPORTER: Could the country get along without it?

MR. DEWHURST: I don't see how it could.

MR. WIRTH: It might, but it would be awfully wasteful and awfully inefficient not to know our own business.

MR. REPORTER: Is it useful to businessmen and workers and home owners and renters and school kids?

MR. WIRTH: There isn't anybody who hasn't something to gain from the census.

MR. REPORTER: Very good. I gather also that you two experts agree that the snooping and prying issue is—how shall I put it?—a lot of political bunk.

MR. WIRTH: Precisely!

MR. DEWHURST: A good deal worse than bunk, Mr. Reporter, because it tends to make the citizens of a democratic country think of their government as their enemy. This isn't a tyranny, thank God! When the census taker comes around he is coming to get information that we, the people, have asked for.

MR. WIRTH: Yes, and he is not a storm trooper. He is an important servant in American life.

SUGGESTED READINGS

"Census Time Again," *New Republic*, November 29, 1939. *A brief evaluation of the approaching Census, with some attention to the questions relative to housing.*

CHASE, STUART, "Population Going Down," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1939; condensed in *Reader's Digest*, March, 1939. *What has happened to America's population in recent years, and why, with some predictions of the future.*

DAVIS, E. C., "The Census Stages a Rehearsal," *Science News Letter*, December 2, 1939. *An account of the experimental census undertaken in 1939 in two Indiana counties.*

FURNAS, J. C., "Who Wants to Know?" *Saturday Evening Post*, July 15, 1939. *The technique of the census described.*

MCKEE, OLIVER, JR., "What's New in the Next Census?" *Nation's Business*, August, 1939. *What the 1940 Census may tell us about America and how useful the data obtained from it will be to businessmen.*

NATHAN, RAYMOND, "Every Ten Years," *School Life*, February, 1940. *A general summary of the Census and how it operates.*

WILSON, G. F., "Uncle Sam Counts Noses," *Current History*, February, 1940; condensed in *Reader's Digest*, February, 1940. *The questions of the 1940 Census—what they are and why they were selected.*

OBJECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION

The answers to the following questions may be found in the text of the broadcast, and page references are provided to assist in locating the answers.

*

1. When was the first census taken? Page 3.

2. What is the primary purpose of the census? Page 7.

3. What is the estimated cost of conducting the 1940 census? Page 3.

4. To guard against use of census information by unauthorized persons, what penalty may be inflicted on a census official violating the confidential character of the information he obtains? Page 4.

5. Where was the test census taken last year? How many people were questioned? Page 5.

6. Give two so-called "personal" questions asked in past census enumerations. Page 6.

7. One of the categories of people the census seeks to enumerate is that of "new worker." What is meant by that term? Pages 10–11.

8. What member of the Senate has sought to have the questions relating to income removed from the census question schedule? Page 16.

9. What are these income questions? Pages 17–18.

10. Give an example of how the census figures on age might affect education. Page 22.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following questions of wider scope, intended for discussion, are suggested by the broadcast, and answers may be found in the literature on the subject listed in the section "Suggested Readings," found on page 25.

*

1. "These census questions . . . . violate your constitutional rights. They constitute an unwarranted prying into your personal affairs, they expose personal information to people in your own community who have been politically appointed as enumerators, and they are an invasion of the natural right of privacy of every citizen." Discuss this statement concerning the income questions in the 1940 census.

2. Indicate some practical and immediate ways in which education, business, and government might be affected if the census this year should show a definite trend toward:

a) The birth of considerably more girls than boys in 1930–40.

b) Heavy movement of population out of cities back to the farm since 1935.

c) Shortening of the average work-week to a maximum of forty hours.

d) A rapidly growing percentage of persons over sixty years of age.

3. Housing questions are being asked on a wide scale for the first time in this year's census. To whom do you think the answers to these questions will be valuable? Discuss.

4. From an examination of the questions asked in the census, suggest questions which you think might be eliminated in the 1950 census, and questions which you think should be added. State an argument pro or con, as the case may be, in each case where you suggest a change.

HOW YOU BECOME A STATISTIC

When the census taker knocks on the doors of 35 million American dwellings this month about 130 million people will answer the questions which are found below. The notations of the census taker will become little holes in cards which will be fed through giant tabulating machines which convert 130 million lives into endless charts and banks of statistics. The following questions are from the population schedule.

*

1. (Street and house number of resident.)

2. Is your home owned or rented?

3. What is the value of your home, or if rented, the monthly rental?

4. (Does this household live on a farm?)

5. What is the name of each person whose *usual place of residence* on April 1, 1940, was in this household? (Including persons temporarily absent, and children. Mark ⊗ after name of person furnishing information.)

6. (Indicate the relationship of each person to the head of the household: wife, daughter, father, mother-in-law, grandson, lodger, servant, etc.)

7. (Indicate sex of each person.)

8. (Indicate color or race.)

9. What was the age of each member of the household on last birthday?

10. What is the marital status of each? (Married, single, divorced, widowed.)

11. Has each attended school or college any time after March 1, 1940?

12. What was the highest grade of school completed?

13. What was the place of birth of each member of this household?

14. What is the citizenship of any foreign born member? (Alien, naturalized, has first papers, American citizen born abroad.)

15. In what place did each person live on April 1, 1935? (City, town, village, farm.)

16. Was each person at work for pay or profit in private or non-emergency government work during the week of March 24–30?

17. If not, was he (or she) at work on, or assigned to, public *emergency work* (WPA, NYA, CCC, etc.), during the week of March 24–30.

18. Was he (or she) seeking work? If not, did he (or she) have a job, business, etc.?

19. (Indicate whether engaged in home housework, in school, unable to work, or other.)

20. If at private or non-emergency government work, what was the number of hours worked during the week of March 24–30?

21. If seeking work, or assigned to public emergency work, what was the duration of employment up to March 30, 1940 (in weeks)?

22. What is the trade or occupation of each?

23. In what business or industry?

24. What is the classification of each worker? (Wage or salary worker in private work? Wage or salary worker in government work? Employer? Working on own account? Unpaid family worker?)

25. What was the number of weeks worked in 1939?

26. What was the total amount of money wages or salary received including commissions?

27. Did each receive income of $50 or more from sources other than money wages or salary?

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SUGGESTED READINGS

"The Church and the Social Order," *a statement by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference,* February 7, 1940. Published by the Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

MARX, WALTER JOHN, "Guilds and Labor Unions," *Commonweal,* February 23, 1940.

MARITAIN, JACQUES, "The Catholic Church and Social Progress," *Foreign Affairs,* July, 1939.

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